DARKWATCH™

INNOCENCE

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NEBRASKA TERRITORY. 1863.
YOU CLOSED THE CUR-TAINS.
SUN... HURTS MY EYES...
THEY'RE COMIN'! GOTTA SHOOT 'EM DOWN!!
SHHHH...
IT'S ALL RIGHT, DADDY.
I... NEED...
I NEED TO SLEEP, NOW.
YOU SHOULD TOO, CASSIDY.
PROMISE YOU WON'T DIE WHILE I SLEEP?
DADDY?
PROMISE.

DADDY?
CASSSSSSSSS- IDY!
NO-- !
YESSS... LET DADDY KISS...
...HIS LITTLE GIRL...
DADDY...?
BLAM!

BLAM!
THIRTEEN YEARS LATER.
AARGHH!
DARK-WATCH BITCH...
YOU HAVE ME BOUND...
...ENJOY YOURSELF, IT WON'T LAST.
MY BROTH-ERS WILL...
...DRINK YOUR SOUL.
BUSY.
GENERAL CARTWRIGHT NEEDS TO SEE YOU.
BLAM!
BLAM!
BLAM!
YOU REALLY HATE THEM, DON'T YOU?
URK!
SHOOTING RANGE
HATE WHO?
THE... VAMPIRES.

I'M A DARK-WATCH REGULATOR. IT'S MY JOB TO KILL BLOOD-SUCKERS.
WHETHER I HATE THEM OR NOT? THAT'S MY BUSINESS.
BUT IF YOU'RE GOING TO DO THIS JOB, YOU CAN'T GET DISTRACTED. NOT BY WHAT THEY SAY, NOT BY WHAT THEY DO.
THEY'RE UN-DEAD. THEY CAN'T FEEL ANYTHING... AND THEY DEFINITELY AIN'T INNOCENT VICTIMS.

THANK YOU FOR COMING, CASSIDY. I TRUST I DIDN'T TEAR YOU AWAY FROM SOMETHING IMPORTANT?
JUST GETTING IN SOME TIME ON THE RANGE, GENERAL.

WITH UNDEAD TARGETS, I AM SURE. THAT'S MY GIRL.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT THIS IS?
IS THIS A TRICK QUESTION?

ALL RIGHT. "IT LOOKS LIKE A PILE OF GOLD, SIR."
A CONVINCING FACSIMILIE... BUT NOT REAL.
IT'S BEEN TURNING UP ALL OVER, SPARKING A NEW GOLD RUSH.

THAT... AND THE FACT THAT THE GOLD IS COMING OUT OF SANTA DIABLO.
TALA!

NOW, WHY WOULD SOMEONE WANT TO CREATE A FALSE GOLD RUSH?

WHO CARES? COUNTERFEITING IS TREASURY BUSINESS.

NOT WHEN ALCHEMY CREATED THE GOLD. THAT MAKES IT DARKWATCH BUSINESS.

I THOUGHT THEY'D BUSTED YOU FROM THE RANKS?

NICE TO SEE YOU TOO, CASS.

DON'T CALL ME "CASS."

GIRLS--! LET'S KEEP IT PRO-FESSIONAL.

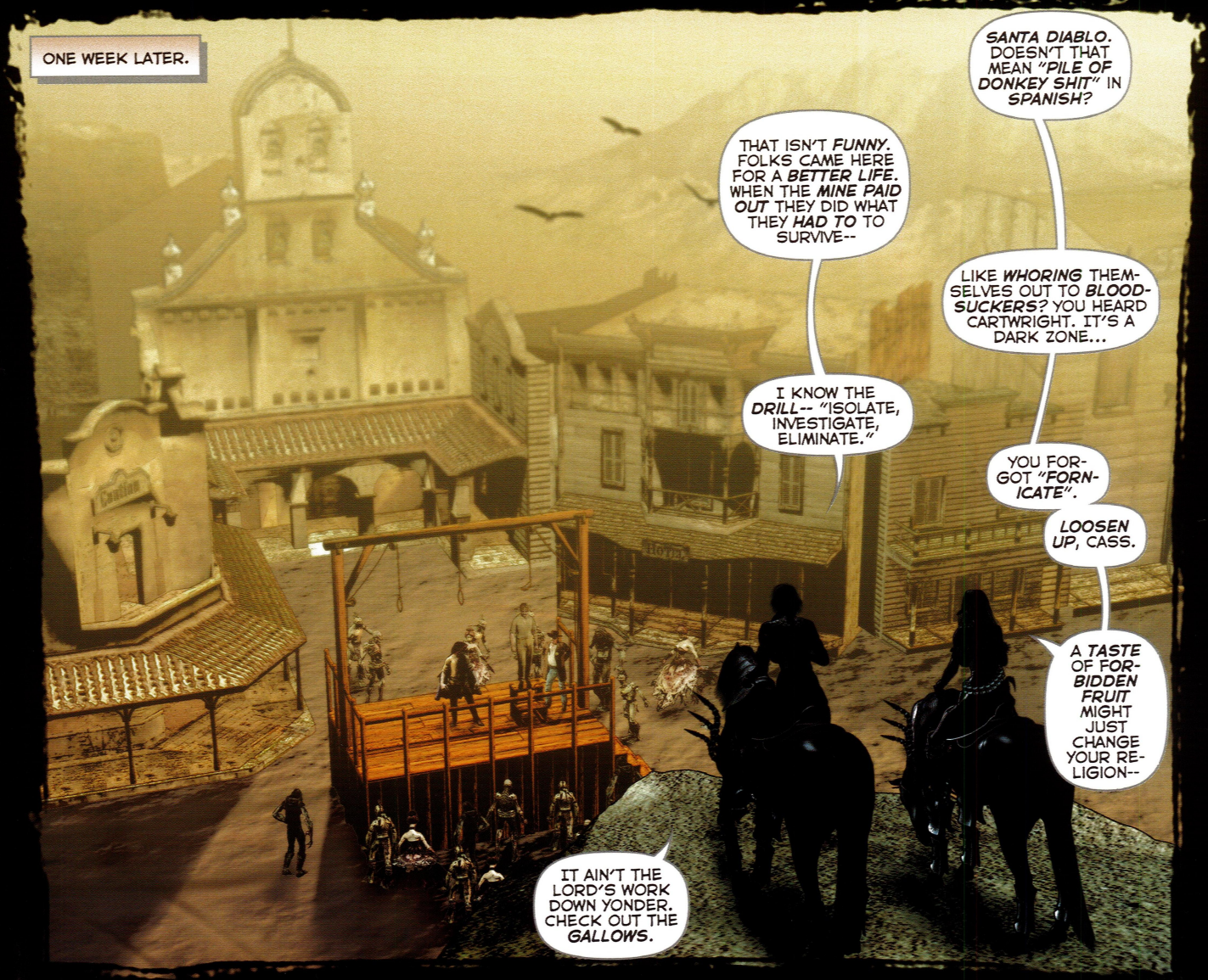
YER PARTNERS AGAIN, SO GET USED TO IT. GET DOWN TO THE ARMORY, AND GEAR UP.
SANTA DIABLO IS IN THE DARK ZONE, SO MAKE SURE YOU'RE PACKIN' THE RIGHT KIND OF IRON.
YES, SAH!
C'MON, CASS.

GOOD LUCK...
...AND MAY GOD HAVE MERCY ON US ALL.
CLAY...

...YOU HAVE... DONE WELL ...
I DONE WHAT I HAD TO, YOU GOD DAMNED DEMON.
NOW YOU OWN UP ON YOUR END OF THE DEAL.
CLAY, YOU HURT US. HAVEN'T WE ALWAYS GIVEN YOU EXACTLY WHAT YOU WANT--
--AND WHAT YOU NEED? IS OUR BARGAIN SO DIFFICULT TO KEEP THEN, DARLING?
GODDAMN YOU! I SENT MY TWO BEST REGULATORS TO SANTA DIABLO! NOW, TELL ME MORE ABOUT HIM-- ABOUT LAZARUS!
ALL IN GOOD TIME. FIRST--
--COME TO MOMMA.

YOU TAKING A RAIL ROCKET? NOW THAT'S A MANLY WEAPON.
DROP DEAD.
I LOVE YOU TOO. IS A CROSS-BOW MORE YOUR SPEED?
WHO DID YOU SCREW TO GET ANOTHER FIELD ASSIGNMENT? CARTWRIGHT?
MY TASTES RUN A DIFFERENT DIRECTION. AS YOU WELL KNOW. HMMM. SANTA DIABLO'S IN THE DARK ZONE. MAYBE DYNAMITE WOULD DO THE TRICK. NOTHING'S TOO BIG FOR THIS JOB.
EXCEPT YOUR MOUTH.

LET'S RIDE, CASS!
--STOP CALLING ME "CASS."


ONE WEEK LATER.
SANTA DIABLO. DOESN'T THAT MEAN "PILE OF DONKEY SHIT" IN SPANISH?
THAT ISN'T FUNNY. FOLKS CAME HERE FOR A BETTER LIFE. WHEN THE MINE PAID OUT THEY DID WHAT THEY HAD TO TO SURVIVE--
LIKE WHORING THEMSELVES OUT TO BLOOD-SUCKERS? YOU HEARD CARTWRIGHT. IT'S A DARK ZONE...
I KNOW THE DRILL-- "ISOLATE, INVESTIGATE, ELIMINATE."
YOU FORGOT "FORNICATE".
LOOSEN UP, CASS.
A TASTE OF FORBIDDEN FRUIT MIGHT JUST CHANGE YOUR RELIGION--
IT AIN'T THE LORD'S WORK DOWN YONDER. CHECK OUT THE GALLOWS.

"--SEEMS TO BE DOING DOUBLE DUTY AS A BLOOD COLLECTOR."
"GOOD EYE, PARD. LET'S HAVE US A POW WOW WITH THE MAN WITH THE LOCAL LAW."

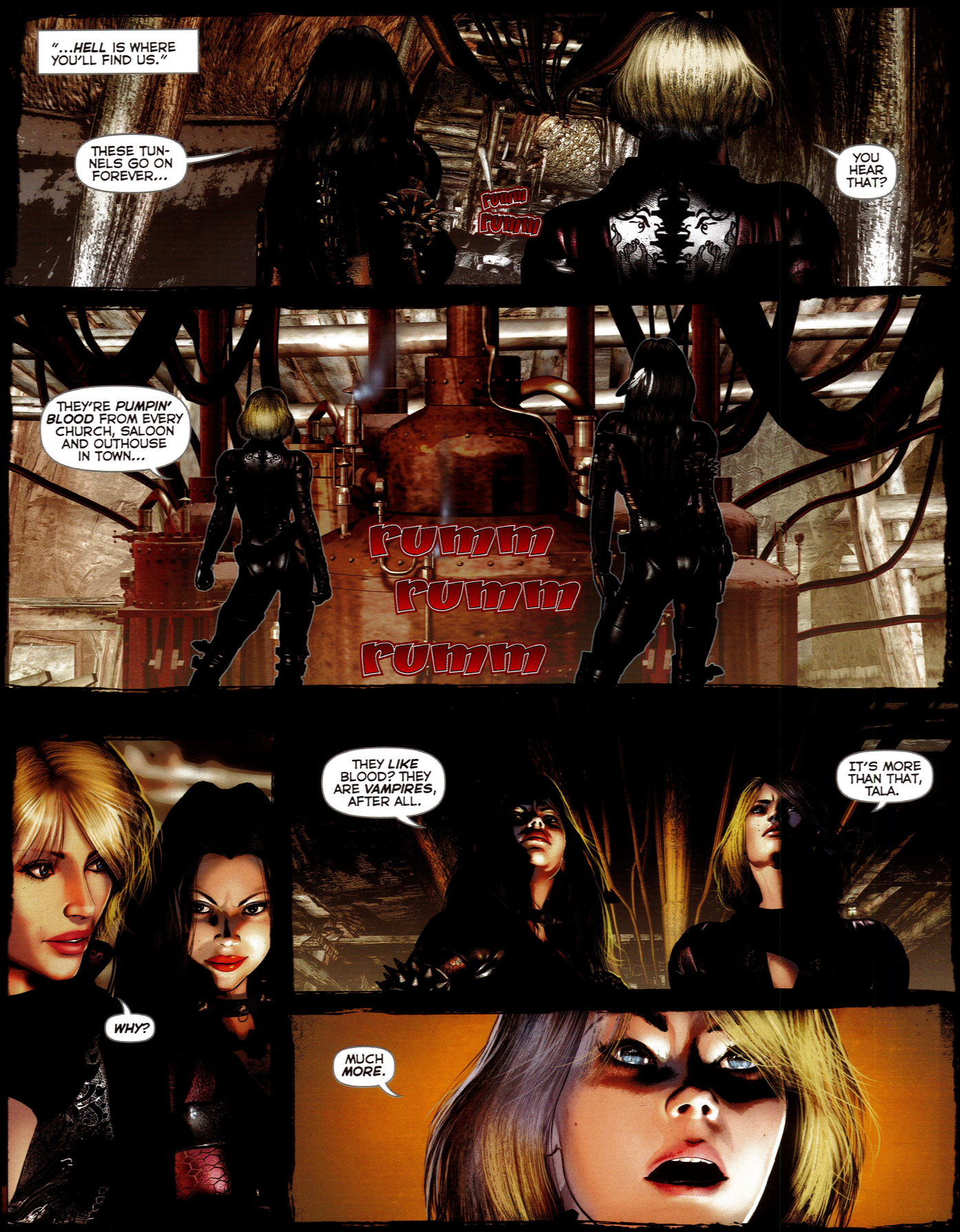
HANGIN' RIFF RAFF GIVES A MAN A POWERFUL THIRST.
YER NEXT, OUTLAW. YOU CAME LOOKIN' FOR GOLD AND WE NEED YOUNG BLOOD.
YOU AIN'T THE FIRST, NOR THE LAST. ALWAYS ANOTHER DRIFTER OUT THERE EAGER TO BELIEVE IN A NEW GOLD RUSH. IT'S A LAW O' NATURE...
THUNK!
AAGHH!
HOWDY, LAW DOG.
I CAN'T--
YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY'LL DO TO ME...
WHERE DOES THE GOLD COME FROM?
BUT I KNOW WHAT I'LL DO TO YOU...
FELLA WEARS A HOOD... AT THE BORDELLO...!
HAVE MERCY.
HERE ARE THE RULES:
YOU TELL ME WHAT I WANT TO KNOW, AND MAYBE I DON'T KILL YOU.
SORRY, FRESH OUT.
GLITCH!

MUCH OBLIGED FOR THE KEYS, MA'AM.
YER WELCOME.
DAMNIT, TALA! YOU CAN'T JUST KILL INNOCENT MEN.
THERE AIN'T NO SUCH THING.
HE WEREN'T SO INNOCENT, ANYWAYS.
I OWE YA.
LOOKS LIKE YOUR LUCKY DAY, MISTER...?
CROSS. JERICHO CROSS. AND YOU ARE... ONE FINE...
MY FACE IS UP HERE, MR. CROSS.
WHEN THE BLOOD FLOWS BACK INTO YOUR HEAD, I SUGGEST YOU HIGH-TAIL IT OUT OF TOWN. THERE'S NOTHING FOR YOU HERE.
NOTHING...
...EXCEPT MAYBE GOLD
Cantina
...AND NOW I KNOW RIGHT WHERE TO FIND IT.

A SALOON FOR VAMPIRES. WITH BLOOD ON TAP.
GOTTA LOVE THE PROMISE OF THE AMERICAN WEST.
FUNNY COSTUME YOU'RE WEARIN?
YOU WERE SAYIN'?
--BUT A NICE PIECE O MEAT--
BLAM
WELL, THAT WAS EASY...
HISSSSSSS
TOO EASY.
WE'VE GOT PROBLEMS.

SSSSSS
I'D MAKE FOR AN EXIT, LADIES!
OH SHIT.
THE WINDOW--
JUMP!
KRASH!
KA-BOOM!

LADIES.
LOOKS LIKE A REWARD MIGHT BE IN ORDER...
I'VE GOT YER REWARD RIGHT HERE...
WAIT.
IF IT'S GOLD HE WANTS, LET 'IM EARN IT.
RIDE NORTH TO SAN MIGUEL. TAKE THIS BADGE TO THE BLACKSMITH'S SHOP AND TELL THEM THE DARKWATCH NEEDS HELP.
THEY'LL SEE TO YER GOLD.
YOU AIN'T HERE WHEN I GET BACK, THERE'S GONNA BE HELL TO PAY.
IF WE AIN'T HERE WHEN YOU GET BACK...

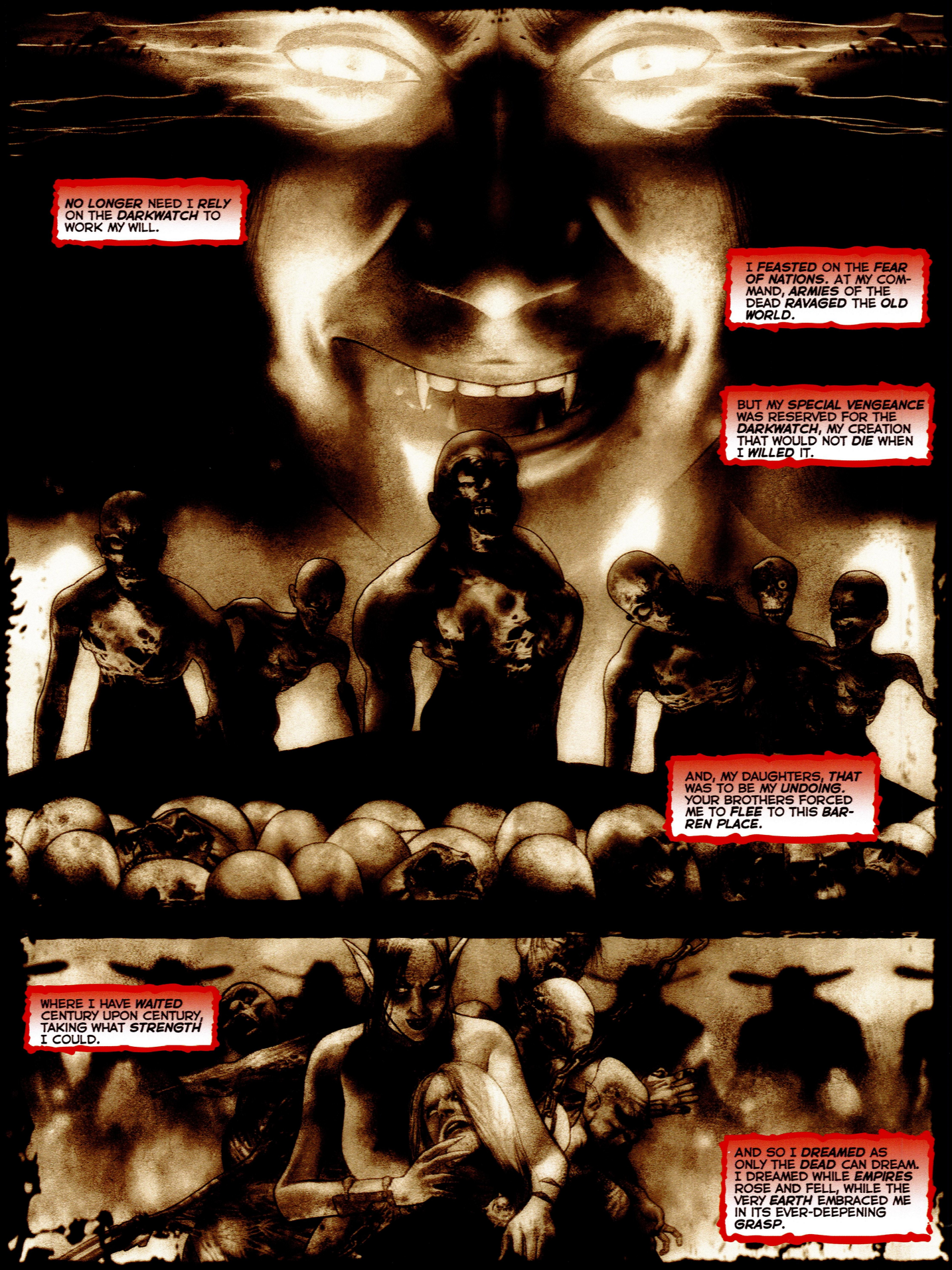

"...HELL IS WHERE YOU'LL FIND US."
THESE TUNNELS GO ON FOREVER...
rumm
rumm
YOU HEAR THAT?
THEY'RE PUMPIN' BLOOD FROM EVERY CHURCH, SALOON AND OUTHOUSE IN TOWN...
rumm
rumm
rumm
THEY LIKE BLOOD? THEY ARE VAMPIRES, AFTER ALL.
IT'S MORE THAN THAT, TALA.
WHY?
MUCH MORE.

THE SEAL... I DON'T BELIEVE IT.
AFTER ALL THESE YEARS. IT'S HIM.
LAZARUS.

WHO?
LAZARUS. THE FOUNDER. THE BETRAYER.
WE'VE GOT TO WARN--
STOP.
SLEEP.
DAUGHTERS OF THE DARKWATCH. YOU HAVE COME AT LAST.
I HAVE SO MUCH TO TELL YOU.

ONCE I WAS A *MAN*.
A *FOOLISH* MAN. A MAN WHO WANTED TO *SAVE* THE WORLD FROM *DARKNESS* WITH A FOOLISH ORGANIZATION CALLED DARKWATCH.
BUT I WAS A *MORTAL* MAN. AND I KNEW MY *CRUSADE* WOULD TAKE *MANY LIFETIMES* OF MEN.

TO CONTINUE MY FIGHT, I SURRENDERED MY SOUL.
WILLINGLY.
AND BECAME A GOD.


NO LONGER NEED I RELY ON THE DARKWATCH TO WORK MY WILL.
I FEASTED ON THE FEAR OF NATIONS. AT MY COMMAND, ARMIES OF THE DEAD RAVAGED THE OLD WORLD.
BUT MY SPECIAL VENGEANCE WAS RESERVED FOR THE DARKWATCH, MY CREATION THAT WOULD NOT DIE WHEN I WILLED IT.
AND, MY DAUGHTERS, THAT WAS TO BE MY UNDOING. YOUR BROTHERS FORCED ME TO FLEE TO THIS BARREN PLACE.
WHERE I HAVE WAITED CENTURY UPON CENTURY, TAKING WHAT STRENGTH I COULD.
AND SO I DREAMED AS ONLY THE DEAD CAN DREAM. I DREAMED WHILE EMPIRES ROSE AND FELL, WHILE THE VERY EARTH EMBRACED ME IN ITS EVER-DEEPENING GRASP.

I DREAMED OF A *NEWLY RISEN* DARKWATCH, BENT TO *MY WILL*.
I DREAMED OF THE *INSTRUMENT OF MY VENGEANCE*, SPRUNG FROM THE *GREED* OF *INNOCENT* MEN. THAT *OUTLAW* YOU MET IN THE SALOON-- *JERICHO CROSS*-- WILL DO NICELY.
AND I DREAMED OF *YOU*, *MY DARLINGS*. WITHOUT YOU, MY DREAMS ARE *ASHES*.
SOON, I WILL WAKE.
WAKE...
WAKE.

JESUS, WHAT A NIGHTMARE-- SHIT!
'BOUT TIME YOU WOKE UP.
LAZARUS! WE'VE GOT TO STOP HIM!
UNLESS WE CAN USE PUBIC HAIR AS A WEAP-ON, WE'RE DEAD MEAT.
IDEAS?
NAH. YOU?
NOPE.
SEEING AS HOW WE'RE ABOUT TO BE SACRIFICED, I GOTTA BE STRAIGHT WITH YOU.
...YAH?
I NEVER LIKED YOU.
AND YOU'RE A BLOODY BITCH.
SO, WE'RE GOOD?
GOOD.

WAIT? BLOOD-- THAT'S IT!
THE BLOOD-- IT WILL MAKE OUR WRISTS SLIPPERY!
GOT TO-- BREAK A PIPE!
ALMOST...
DID IT!!
OW.
NOW WHAT?
WE FIGHT!!

GOOD. THAT'S SOMETHING I KNOW HOW TO DO.
SPURG!
CRAK!
SOMETHING'S UP! THEY'RE FALLING BACK...
OOZER!
BREAK RIGHT!
DEATH BY SPIT. HOW EMBARRASSING.

HERGH HERGH HERGH...

BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA

URK?

CRASH!
DARKWATCH STEAMWAGONS!
YEE-HAW! THE CAVALRY IS HERE!

WELL, I GUESS THAT *OUTLAW* WASN'T *FUNNIN'* WHEN HE SAID YOU LADIES NEEDED RESCUIN'.
TOO BAD HE DIDN'T *STICK AROUND* TO COLLECT HIS *REWARD*.

NOW, *HOLD ON* A SECOND, GENERAL! WE DIDN'T NEED RESCUING... !

EASY, CASSIDY. YOU'VE BOTH DONE A *FINE* JOB.
HERE. YOU'LL BE NEEDIN' THIS *BACK*.

WAIT A SECOND--! THEY'RE RUNNIN' OFF WITH *LAZARUS'* COFFIN!
LOOKS LIKE *YOU* AND THE REST OF THE CAVALRY CAN HANDLE THE *CLEAN-UP* HERE, *GENERAL*.
TALA AND ME HAVE GOT A *STAGE* TO *CATCH*!

HYAH!
VROOM!
BOOM!
IT'S NO USE!
THAT THING'S ARMORED!
HANG ON!
YOU CRAZY-- !
WE CAN'T RAM HIM!

SSSSSS
LOOK OUT!
BOOM!
SHOOT HIM, AL-READY!
DAMN GUN CAN'T AIM THAT LOW!
HOLD HER STEADY!

YEEE-HAAAAAA!

ALL RIGHT, YOU SON-OF-A-BITCH...

THIS IS FOR TYIN' ME UP--

AND *THIS* IS FOR PUTTIN' ME IN THIS DAMN *OUTFIT!*

UH OH.

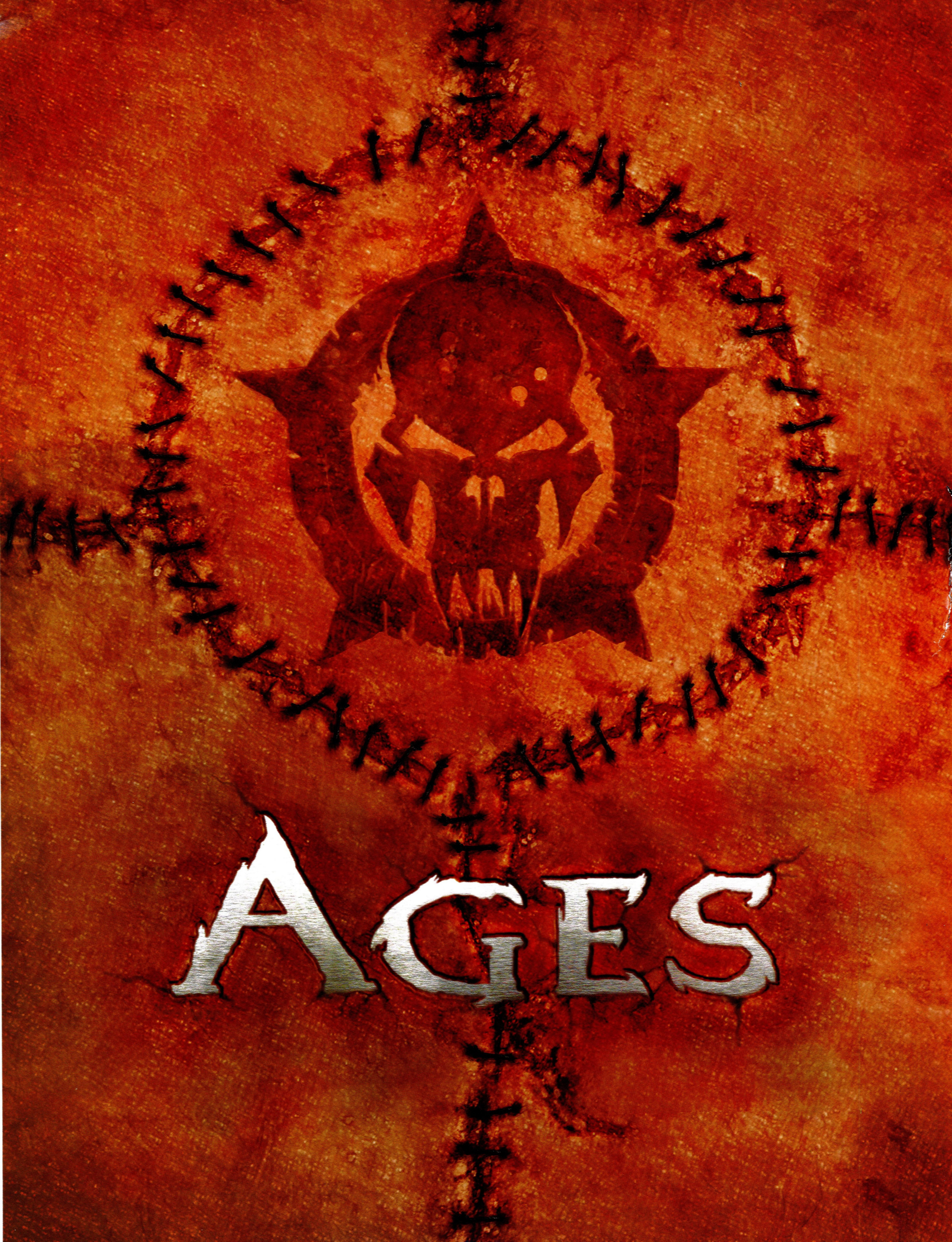
TALA!
STILL BREATHING...
HISSSSSSS
OK.
WE'LL DO THIS THE OLD FASHIONED WAY.
YOUR... MOVE...
DRAW!

BLAM!
NOW...
THUD
...LET'S SEE WHAT'S UNDER THAT HOOD.
MY GOD... NO...
DADDY...?
I'M DYING, CASSIDY... FINALLY DYING.
YOU'RE NOT MY FATHER!
BEFORE I DIE...
CASSIDY... THANK YOU...
TRY NOT TO HATE ME. I'VE BEEN SO SICK I NEEDED HELP.
...I WANT TO KISS MY LITTLE GIRL...

...ONE LAST TIME...
NO...!!!
BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!
TOLD YA THERE AIN'T NO SUCH THING AS AN INNOCENT MAN.
WAS HE REALLY YOUR FATHER?
NO...
...YES...!
IT'S ALL RIGHT, CASSIDY. LET IT OUT. LET IT ALL OUT.

LATER.
WE CAME OUT HERE LOOKIN' FOR GOLD, AND INSTEAD WE FOUND LAZARUS. MYSTERIOUS FORCES ARE AFOOT.
I SENT YOU ON THIS MISSION ... AFTER A TIP FROM A SOURCE I CAN'T REVEAL. IF I HURT YOU BY DOIN IT, THEN I'M SORRY...
WHICH IS AN OLD MAN'S WAY OF SAYIN'... YOU DONE GOOD, CASSIDY. I'M PROUD OF YOU.
I UNDERSTAND, SIR.
WHAT HAPPENED TO CROSS-- THE OUTLAW?
HE RABBITED. MARK MY WORDS, THAT'S THE LAST WE'LL EVER SEE OF THAT SCUM.
HE WAS A SNAKE, SNAKES HAVE THEIR USES, 'SPECIALLY WHEN YOU'RE FIGHTIN' SOMETHING WORSE THAN SNAKES--
--BUT WE'D BE LOST WITHOUT ANGELS LOOKIN' OUT FER INNOCENT MEN.
THERE AIN'T NO SUCH THING, GENERAL.
HA! WELL, OF COURSE THERE AIN'T!
BUT THAT DON'T STOP US FROM BELIEVIN' IN 'EM, DOES IT?
YOU SURE YOU'RE UP TO THIS COMMAND?
YES, SIR.
SHOULD BE A MILK RUN.
KEEP ALERT WHILE YOU TRANSPORT LAZARUS BACK TO THE CITADEL--

"-- BUT AIN'T NO ONE'S GONNA BE *FOOL* ENOUGH TO TAKE ON A *DARKWATCH ARMORED TRAIN.*"
END


AGES

Origins of the Darkwatch

The Darkwatch spans the history of the ages. Their ranks and deeds are woven deeply and secretly into the events that shaped the world. Well camouflaged, Darkwatch agents move silently through the masses, keeping vigilant check on the horrors that stalk humanity. The hidden heroes of this secret society routinely sacrifice their lives to protect a civilization which is blind to their efforts, and fearful of their designs.

- **410 AD** Goths sack Rome.
- **476** End of Western Roman Empire. Lazarus Malkoth founds the Darkwatch.
- **620** Viking invasions.
- **771** Charlemagne, a Darkwatch Elder, crowned King of the Franks.
- **1241** Darkwatch Crusaders play secret role in driving Mongols from Europe.
- **1348** Vampires unleash the Black Death.
- **1431** Jeanne d'Arc, rogue Darkwatch Agent, burned at the stake by order of Darkwatch Inquisitors.
- **1477** Lazarus Malkoth flees to the Americas.
- **1492** Columbus "discovers" the New World. Vampires are waiting for him.

Darkwatch Centurion 476AD

Desperate Beginnings

Rome did not fall to barbarian hordes, civil war, or treachery. Foreign intrigue, economic collapse, and theological conflict did not end the Roman Empire.

It was vampires.

As flames consumed the Empire, a coven of Roman soldiers and priests swore fealty to each other and their common goal: search out, study, and destroy the undead lords that toppled Rome. The Darkwatch was born even as the last library burned, and the ashes of Rome scattered on the wind. The Darkwatch took symbols of the Cross – the religion of their dead empire – and a vampire skull – their sworn enemies – as the secret badge of their new cabal.

With Rome a fast-fading memory, undead legions threatened all of Europe. With primitive technology and courage born of desperation, Darkwatch Centurions combated the forces of darkness with every weapon and tactic they had at hand. A score of secret battles saw the undead tide turned back and then held in check, as the Darkwatch traded lives for time.

Tactics that had made Rome master of the world were adapted to battle this new and inhuman foe. A formidable defense was key, for one stray fang from a vampire might cause a unit of centurions to descend into cannibalism. The Testudo shield wall, a formation which maximized defense by creating an impervious mass of shields, protected the first Darkwatch warriors from hoards of the undead. A unit was only as strong as its weakest man Many captains were forced to cut down their own injured soldiers before those soldiers turned into puppets of the enemy.

During the Dark Ages, the Darkwatch operated from fortified monasteries, where they hoarded information and resources, and gathered their strength for the next epoch of their eternal war.

Unlike the superstitious and shattered states of old Europe, the Dark Ages Darkwatch sought technology, magic, and wisdom from around the world to forge of an arsenal generations in advance of their time. Weapons, armor, and elite military tactics were gathered from every corner of the globe. The Darkwatch formed a bulwark against the undead, which flourished while humanity was weakened by famine and disease.

The mainstay of Dark Ages operations was the Darkwatch Crusader. Deployed individually the Crusader was prepared to operate on his own for years at a time. His armor was designed for rugged use, and his crossbow was built to aim true. More important than the armor were the men and women who wore it, who required souls hardened like steel to continually confront the horror that gnawed at the flickering remains of human society.

By the time Columbus sailed for India, the Darkwatch had attached explosives to crossbows and manufactured durable hand-held weapons that fired at a far greater rate than the primitive muzzle loaders in common use at the time. Explosive grenades that burned with the heat of the sun and brain-blasting magic spells were last ditch weapons employed by desperate Crusaders.

With discovery of the New World, the Darkwatch splintered into two groups: the hardliners who steeped themselves in tradition and ceremony, and the forward thinkers who sought to gain an advantage against evil by intensifying their pursuit of advanced technology. The New World brought new opportunities for the forward thinkers to ramp up their research and development.

The undead were entrenched in the Americas, where they ruled degenerate and blood-soaked secret cults and societies, unchecked by a fearful and powerless populace. The divided Darkwatch found themselves fighting a losing battle. Vampires and their minions were simply more powerful than men, even men armed with the latest Darkwatch weaponry.

So the Darkwatch resolved to fight fire with fire. They began experimentation on the undead themselves.

The Darkwatch soon discovered many useful things: The skin of a vampire was far more resilient than any armor they could manufacture. Vampire blood was an almost limitless source of energy if harnessed properly. Vampire bones could be carefully refined into unstable but highly effective explosives. From such experiments, the new Darkwatch Regulator emerged, wearing a cured vampire skin as body armor, and carrying vampire blood and viscera to power even more potent weaponry.

1618
Thirty Years War begins in Europe. Vampires emerge from the shadows to prey on mankind in a period of unparalleled bloodshed and chaos.

1564
Vampires establish strongholds in Russia.

1521
Darkwatch Inquisitors accompanying Hernan Cortez destroy Vampire cabal in Tenochitlan. Lazarus Malkoth goes into hiding.

DARKWATCH CRUSADER 1241

The Good...

Darkwatch Regulators performed best in small units. With rapid-fire Darkwatch Redeemer pistols in hand, units of Regulators functioned like small self-contained armies.

1692
Salem witchcraft trials in New England.

Darkwatch Redeemer

The West was not won by the Colt, but by the Darkwatch Redeemer.

The 1876 Redeemer Revolver was a watershed design for the Darkwatch, combining massive firepower with a simple architecture resistant to jamming and misfire. Ingenious in its clever use of existing technology, the Redeemer boasted a removable cartridge secured to its barrel by ten jagged iron teeth. The Redeemer used modified ejector pins to continuously feed cylinder charges into the weapon's muzzle. Once expended, each cylinder was automatically ejected through the breech to make room for the next cylinder. In this way, a Darkwatch Regulator could discharge up to 18 cylinders before replacing the cartridge.

1755
Darkwatch Inquisitor plot to destroy all undead goes disastrously wrong; 30,000 die in Lisbon earthquake.

1793
Vampires fail to establish "Empire of the Night" during French Reign of Terror.

1804
Lewis and Clark explore north-western America. Darkwatch agents discover extensive clan network of vampires.

Darkwatch Coyote

The Darkwatch of the 19th century also used the Coyote steamwagon to rapidly deploy Darkwatch Regulators to the front lines in the war against darkness. Armed with a Gatling gun and equipped with a powerful ram, the Coyote served as a potent anti-vampire assault vehicle as well.

For a time, it seemed that the Darkwatch was gaining ground in their war against evil. But corruption ate at the heart of the Darkwatch, even as foul events mustered in the American southwest.

Darkwatch Regulator 1861

The Bad...

Lazarus Malkoth was the Roman who founded the Darkwatch in 476 A.D. Early victories inflated his pride, leading Lazarus to believe that he could gain ultimate power over darkness by harnessing the demon spirit of the first vampire, Primus. When Lazarus gave this demon form and substance, Lazarus was corrupted by the very forces that he was trying to destroy. He turned against the Darkwatch, becoming their greatest foe.

Narrowly defeated by the Dark Ages Darkwatch, Lazarus fled to the Americas. There, a debased offshoot of the Aztec empire worshipped his desiccated and weakened earthly form. The tribe built a temple for Lazarus in the remote desert of what would later be called Mexico. The misguided Indians worked until they could work no more, then plunged their spent bodies on the spikes around the tomb to feed Lazarus with their lifeblood.

The Indians of this doomed tribe slowly died off, while other tribes avoided the temple as cursed land. Eventually, the land reclaimed the temple and buried it. No longer fed by blood, Lazarus slipped into a coma, aware only of his bloodlust and dark dreams of power.

The temple containing Lazarus was rediscovered in the 1860's by miners digging new branches of the Santa Diablo gold mine. Reawakened, Lazarus slowly spread his influence through the souls in this tiny mining town, ensnaring the unsuspecting townsfolk with his will. He sensed that his opportunity had finally come to unleash his diabolical plans, and bend the will of humanity to his own.

Through dark sorcery, Lazarus' spirit communed with the Darkwatch Brain Trust, a horrible consortium of linked vampire minds kept alive by torturous means. The Darkwatch used the Brain Trust to calculate the movements and schemes of the undead. Working through the Brain Trust like a spectral puppeteer, Lazarus led the Darkwatch to his lair. By allowing them to capture his coffin, he gave them a moment of false victory that would lead to his freedom.

When an explosion rocked the Darkwatch train carrying Lazarus to confinement and torture at the Darkwatch Citadel, the destinies of the Darkwatch and an outlaw loner named Jericho Cross became forever intertwined. This unlikely twist of fate determined not only the future of the Western frontier, but the destiny of humanity itself.

Lazarus Malkoth 476AD

1848
Jericho Cross born in Missouri.

1858
Tala's parents are murdered.

And Death Came with Them...

Jericho Cross

The young Jericho Cross left Missouri and joined the Union army after a tragic argument with his slave-owning father. Disgusted by the atrocities he witnessed in the Civil War, Jericho deserted his regiment and drifted out West. Jericho's rage found an outlet in the life of an outlaw, and his face soon found its way onto wanted posters across the West.

FARZAD VARAHRAMYAN / CHRIS ULM

Jericho Cross 1876

With his strong jaw and dead-eyed gaze, Jericho fits the part of a tough outlaw and trail rider. There is something dust covered and rumpled about him. Even in a brand new Darkwatch uniform, he looks like he hasn't slept indoors for a month.

As 1876 dawns, a lean and gritty Jericho is trying his hand at a new trade: robbing trains near Arizona's southern border.

Cassidy Sharp

Orphaned when vampires slaughtered her parents, Cassidy Sharp was raised as a ward of the Darkwatch, and trained to become a Darkwatch agent.

To earn respect in a man's world, Cassidy had to ride, shoot, and fight as well as any man, and think faster than all of them. Haunted by visions of her family's massacre, Cassidy harbored deep doubts about her abilities and courage in the face of the supernatural. She overcompensated by being the most serious and idealistic agent in the Darkwatch.

Cassidy was dedicated to the Darkwatch and especially its leader, Clay Cartwright. She was blind to the faults of the organiza-

tion, and the creeping corruption that threatened to destroy it from within.

As the sole surviving agent of the Darkwatch train transporting Lazarus Malkoth, Cassidy reacted in typical fashion. Resourcefully deputizing Jericho Cross into the Darkwatch, she led him in a desperate bid to warn her superiors about Lazarus' escape.

1861
American Civil War begins. Darkwatch Regulators deployed. Darkwatch weapons and tactics tested by both sides.

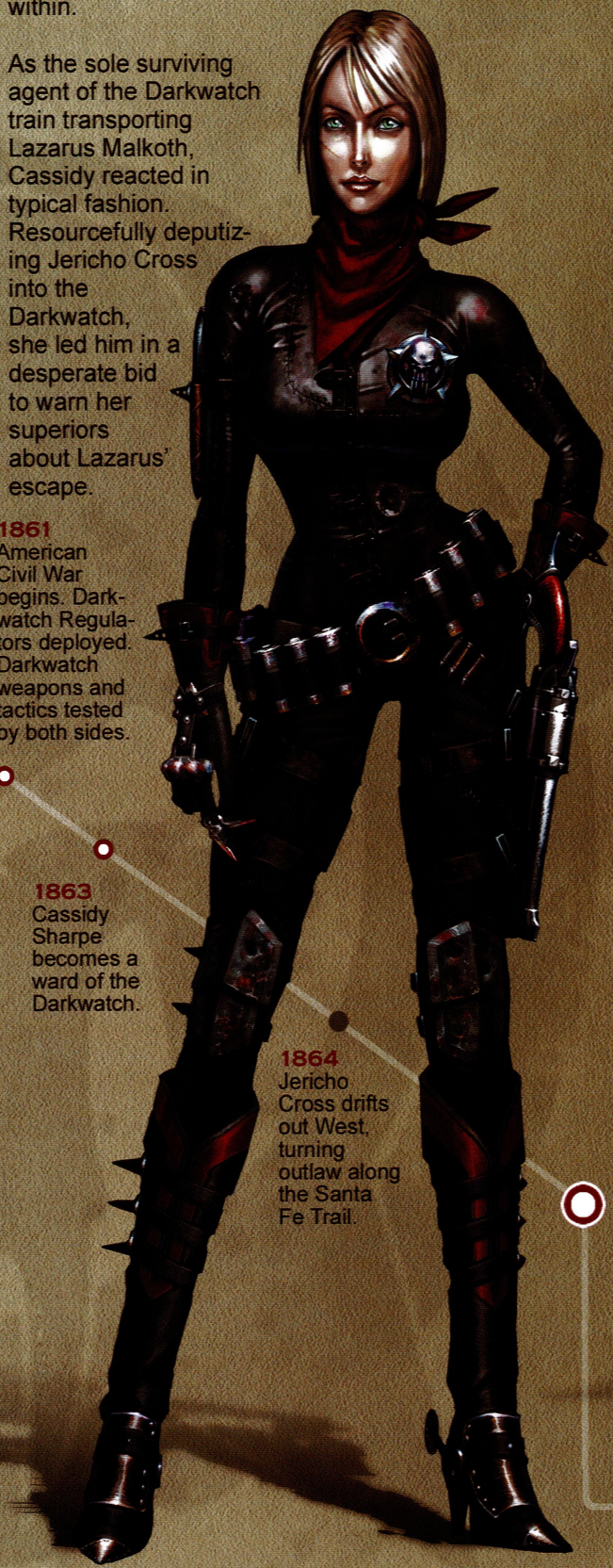
1863
Cassidy Sharpe becomes a ward of the Darkwatch.

1864
Jericho Cross drifts out West, turning outlaw along the Santa Fe Trail.

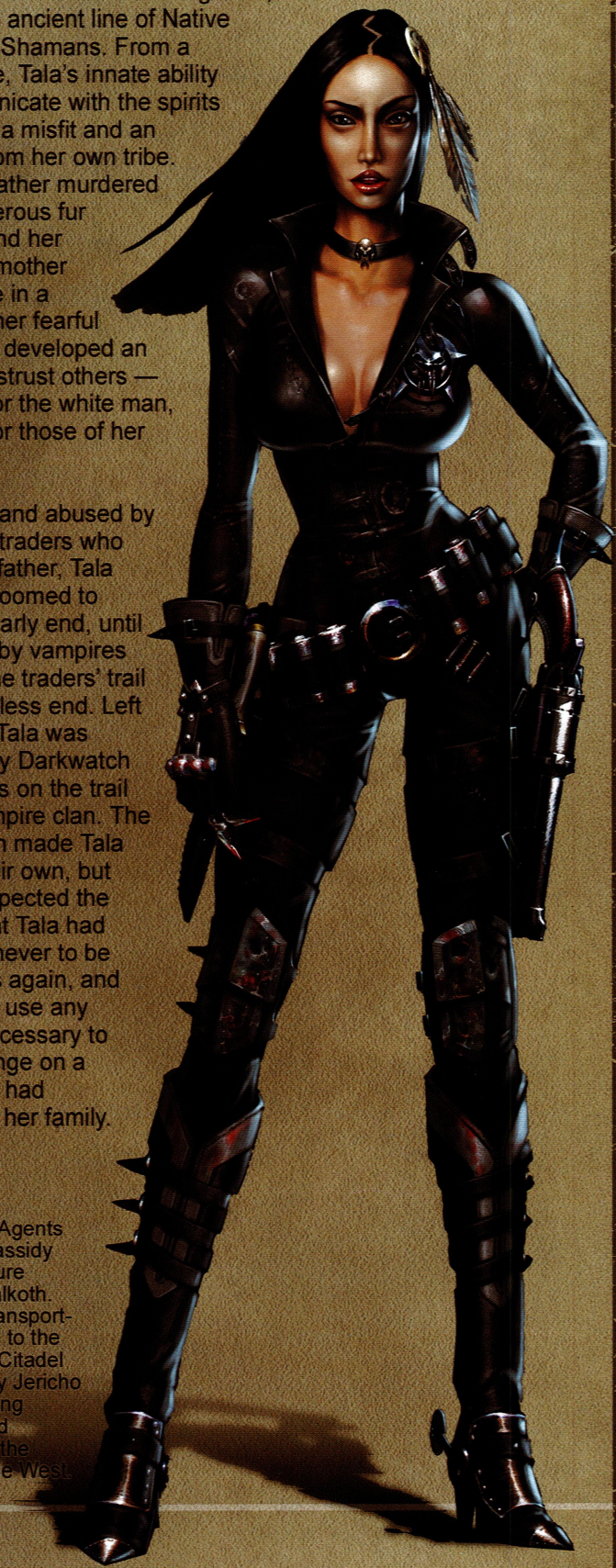
Tala
Whose name means "Stalking Wolf," was born to an ancient line of Native American Shamans. From a young age, Tala's innate ability to communicate with the spirits made her a misfit and an outcast from her own tribe. With her father murdered by treacherous fur traders, and her seer of a mother sent to die in a storm by her fearful tribe, Tala developed an intense distrust others — not only for the white man, but also for those of her own tribe.

Captured and abused by the same traders who killed her father, Tala seemed doomed to meet an early end, until an attack by vampires brought the traders' trail to a merciless end. Left for dead, Tala was rescued by Darkwatch Regulators on the trail of the vampire clan. The Darkwatch made Tala one of their own, but never suspected the truth – that Tala had resolved never to be powerless again, and that she'd use any means necessary to gain revenge on a world that had murdered her family.

1876
Darkwatch Agents Tala and Cassidy Sharp capture Lazarus Malkoth. The train transporting Lazarus to the Darkwatch Citadel is robbed by Jericho Cross, freeing Lazarus and unleashing the Curse on the West.



Cassidy Sharp 1876



Tala 1876

Into the Sunset...

During the first World War, veterans told tales of enemies they would riddle with bullets, only to see them rise again and go for their throats. Hundreds of square miles became a kill zone. Mounds of bodies piled up, and from the trenches of western Europe became a vampire Valhalla.

The Darkwatch Commandos were deployed to deal with the resurgence of vampires in the Great War. In fields cloaked with poison gas and pocked with mud-filled shell holes, Darkwatch Commando strike teams engaged the undead in open combat. In event of infection, Commandos were equipped with cyanide pills, to insure they did not add their flesh to the ranks of the undead enemy.

A new century of worldwide communication threatened to reveal the Darkwatch's secret war against the undead. Fearing that a wave of fear and chaos might topple a Europe already horrified by the realities of the Great War, the Darkwatch were forced to take desperate action. Media moguls received visits from the Darkwatch in the night: "Be silent or be silenced."

With the media quieted, Darkwatch Commandos infiltrated a dark castle in Austria, and destroyed the vampire lord that had caused much of the chaos surrounding the Great War. Soon Europe fell back into a quiet, unsuspecting lull.

The seed was planted for the Darkwatch's greatest challenge. While the Darkwatch were able to silence the media, the governments of the world were not so easily swayed. Major governments not only learned of the existence of vampires, but also captured specimens. In a misguided attempt to gain an advantage in the face of growing international threats, the governments of Europe and the United States began secret experimentation on the undead. The results of these experiments were disastrous. The first monstrous prototypes were deployed by Germany on the eastern front during World War II.

Later, the United States and the Soviet Union deployed similar experimental creatures as spies and assassins. Supernaturally-altered soldiers become elite units on the battlefields of World War II. Whenever one of these creatures were let loose, the Darkwatch needed to deal not only with it, but also the dozens of souls that fell in its wake. The war against the undead would extend beyond the battlefields of Europe and Asia, into the shadow struggle of the Cold War, and beyond.

1939
World War II begins in Europe. The shadow war between the Darkwatch and the undead comes under increasing public scrutiny.

1911
Revolution in Mexico. Vampire influence is suspected, but a weakened Darkwatch is powerless to intervene.

1914
Vampires make their bid for empire against the backdrop of the First World War. Darkwatch Commandos enter battle. The Darkwatch rallies and narrowly defeats the forces of darkness in the mud-filled trenches of the western front.

1934
Rise of Nazi party aided by undead cabal.

Darkwatch Commando 1914

1948
Cold War begins. All nations now experimenting with sorcery and undead technology. The Darkwatch plays an undocumented role in the fate of nations.

In the early 21st century, private military contracts led bloated and corrupt biotech and weapons companies to push supernatural technologies further. They bred vampiric assassins that blended into the population, and super soldiers capable of withstanding massive bodily damage. Hostile takeovers took on a new name as corporations deployed private assassins to eliminate threats to the bottom line. With such wonton abuse of the power, it was just a matter of time until the corporations and governments would lose control of their own monstrous forces.

The Darkwatch was forced to take desperate measures to regain control of the undead: Dozens of elite Darkwatch agents volunteered to be medically converted, and donned the Nightstalker suit. Once again, the Darkwatch used the vampire to augment their technology: They built the Nightstalker suit to enhance the operator with armor powered by advanced technology, and to regulate and suppress the operator's emerging vampirism.

Late 20th Century
Darkwatch gradually expands powerbase, assuming secret control of multinational corporations to combat similar infiltration by a wealthy and subtle vampire elite.

Small cadres of these bred vampires sprang up across the globe, hell-bent on destroying the world that created them. The Darkwatch faced their greatest threat in the forms of engineered vampires with the training, knowledge and discipline of 40 year military veterans — and the most advanced technology ever devised for killing. The entire world became a battlefield where nothing was sacred and everything suffered collateral damage. Will the Darkwatch persevere?

Early 21st Century
Darkwatch Nightstalkers take the struggle against darkness to earth's solar system, and beyond.

Nightstalker Early 21st Century

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